

deadbeat parents in egregious interstate cases of child support delinquency and enable Federal authorities to go after those who attempt to escape State-issued child support orders by fleeing across State lines.

Under the Child Support Recovery Act sponsored by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE] and enacted with broad bipartisan support in 1992, a bill which I cosponsored with the gentleman from Illinois, parents who willfully withhold child support payments totaling more than \$5,000, or owing for more than 1 year, are presently subject to a misdemeanor punishable by not more than 6 months imprisonment. A subsequent offense is a felony punishable by up to 2 years in prison.

The law that we are introducing today addresses the difficulty States frequently encounter in attempting to enforce child support orders beyond their borders. The Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act would augment current law by creating a felony offense for parents with an arrearage totaling more than \$10,000 or owing for more than 2 years. This provision, like current law, would apply where the non-custodial parent and child legally reside in different States.

In addition, the Deadbeats Act would make it a felony for a parent to cross a State border with the intent of evading child support orders where the arrearage totals more than \$5,000 or is more than 1 year past due, regardless of residency.

Mr. Speaker, this House has articulated in the welfare bill that we passed, in the act sponsored by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE], and other legislation, that we expect those who have children in America to take responsibility for those children, to ensure, whether or not the family unit stays intact, that those children have adequate resources to be housed, to be clothed, to be fed, to be nurtured.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress cannot force or mandate by law that parents will love their children. We hope that they will do that. We know that that is critical to a child's welfare. We know as well that the failure of some parents to do that has led to a crisis in this country when it comes to crime committed by children, teenage pregnancy, and other activity that we lament being perpetrated by young people. But, in fact, it is parents who we should expect and, yes, demand that they meet their responsibilities, first to their children, but then as well to their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to cosponsor this act with me, and I hope that we have early hearings and early passage of this act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. TIAHRT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

LANDOWNER IGNORED IN MONTANA LAND TRANSACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Montana [Mr. HILL] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to visit with my colleagues about the New World Mine. Some of my colleagues may recall that on August 12, 1996, the President announced that he wanted to pay \$65 million to purchase a mining interest that is close to Yellowstone Park.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement, or deal, if you will, was negotiated in secret. It was negotiated in the back rooms, in the corridors, in the boardrooms of the White House and environmental groups and a mining company. Who was left out? Who was not consulted?

Mr. Speaker, the Governor of Montana was not consulted, and therefore the citizens of Montana were not consulted. The Montana congressional delegation was left out. Local government officials were never consulted. Land management agencies were not consulted. Congress itself was left out. But most surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, the owner of the land was left out, too.

Mr. Speaker, the President first proposed that we give \$65 million worth of public lands in Montana to this out-of-State, out-of-Nation mining company, and that caused a great uproar in Montana. Montanans feel a great attachment to the land. They hunt on it, they fish on it, they camp on it, and they enjoy it immensely for hiking and berry picking. Many Montanans, Mr. Speaker, make their living off the land.

That uproar caused the President to change his mind. Then he proposed giving \$100 million out of the CRP program, the Conservation Reserve Program, to buy out this mine, and that created even a greater outrage. Environmentalists and sportsmen and farmers said, "No, don't do that, Mr. President."

So then the President asked that we give him a blank check. Mr. Speaker, the House said no. The reason that the House said no is because the President had decided to ignore two very important parties in this transaction. One is the State of Montana and the citizens of Montana but, more importantly, the property owner, Margaret Reeb.

It turns out that Margaret Reeb owns the mineral interest that the President had entered into an agreement secretly to buy out. The problem is that they never contacted Margaret Reeb, they never consulted with Margaret Reeb, and they never entered into any agreements with Margaret Reeb. It would be like, Mr. Speaker, having a neighbor come to you one day and say, "I sold

my house to some people who came along, but the only way they'd buy it is if I sold them yours, too, so I sold them your house, too." That is how Margaret Reeb feels.

The secret deal was made behind closed doors, and it cut out the public. There were no hearings, there was no authority, there was no appropriation. And, Mr. Speaker, the President even cut off the National Environmental Policy Act in the process.

Montana was hurt, too. Four hundred sixty-six jobs, Mr. Speaker, will be lost; \$45 million in tax revenues to the State of Montana; even Park County, MT, lost \$1.2 million.

What should we do? Mr. Speaker, the Denver Post wrote an editorial on September 8. It says this:

The Clinton administration goofed when it ignored a private landowner during negotiations to block a proposed gold mine near Yellowstone National Park. Even a first-year law student would know that to do a land swap, the landowner must be consulted. That the White House didn't do so is inexcusable.

It goes on to say:

But as it explores all lawful alternatives, the Clinton administration should avoid acting heavy-handedly. It was Clinton's minions whose omissions left the landowner out of the loop in the first place. It's now their job to fix the problem.

Mr. Speaker, that obligation is to Margaret Reeb, and that obligation is to the people of Montana. I have proposed an alternative to this mechanism, and that alternative would save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. It would protect the property rights of Margaret Reeb, and it would deal with the concerns of the people of the State of Montana. I would urge my colleagues to support me in this effort to propose an alternative that is fair and it is responsible, it is fair to the parties who are involved, it is fair to Margaret Reeb, and it is fair to the State of Montana.

GOLD MINE PACT BUNGLED

The Clinton administration goofed when it ignored a private land owner during negotiations to block a proposed gold mine near Yellowstone National Park.

The original proposal, involving a land swap, was put together more than a year ago by the White House, an environmental group and a major mining company.

Crown Butte wanted to develop its New World Gold Mine just 3 air miles from Yellowstone. An environmental impact statement was being prepared because the mine needs the approval of federal agencies. Although the mine's supporters claimed the EIS' publication was imminent, the document actually was behind schedule.

Meantime, the National Park Service vigorously campaigned against the mine on grounds that the operation might harm Yellowstone's ecological balance and potentially disrupt its geological wonders. A rift developed between the Park Service and other federal agencies over whether the EIS would adequately address these concerns.

The White House intervened and offered Crown Butte the chance to swap the controversial property for another parcel elsewhere. That deal later unraveled, so now the